NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE

bulletin

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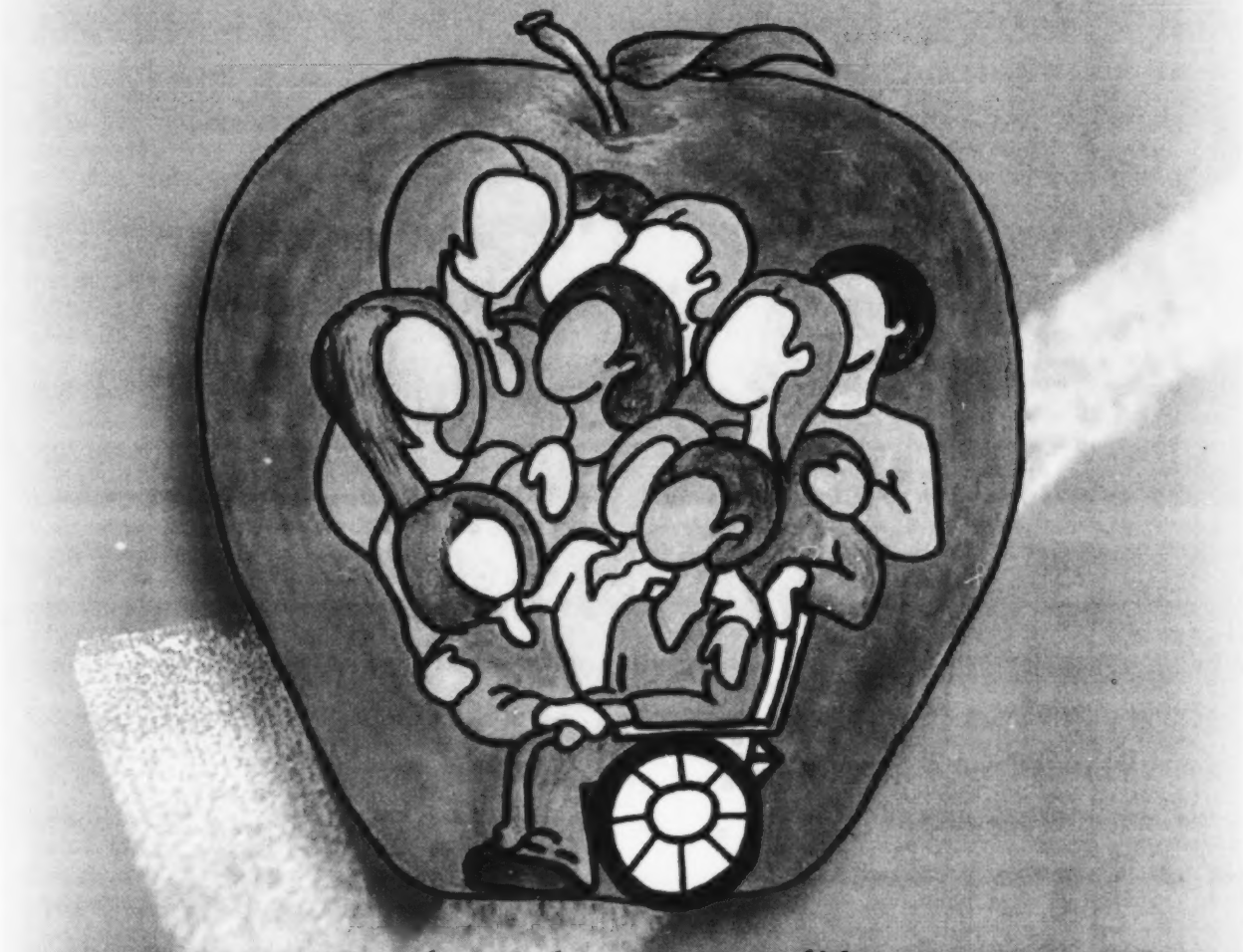
September/October 2008



Teachers change your life
World Teachers' Day
October 5, 2008
Vous m'enseignez? Vous changez ma vie!
Journée mondiale des enseignantes et des enseignants
le 5 octobre 2008

Up Front from the President

Allow me to take this opportunity to extend to you a warm and sincere welcome back to your schools throughout the province. I would also like to offer a special greeting to our beginning teachers as they take on their new assignments alongside our more seasoned educators. My best wishes to all of you for a very successful and productive year.

As you may be aware, October 5 is World Teachers' Day. The theme this year is *Teachers Change Your Life*. In 1994 the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated October 5 World Teachers' Day. In adopting the UNESCO recommendation, governments around the world unanimously recognized the need and importance for every society to have competent, qualified and motivational teachers. In recent months several incidents around the world have warranted a response by the NLTA on behalf of teachers. In July we were notified that a pattern of violence targeting teachers and trade unionists has been occurring in Zimbabwe. The NLTA, along with other teacher organizations, condemned these attacks and called for an immediate cessation of any and all violence, now and in the future and for the establishment of peaceful co-existence between government forces and the teachers of that country. The NLTA had also petitioned for the release of teachers in Ethiopia who were arrested and unjustly accused of being members of an illegal organization. There have been reports from other countries of government officials and police interfering in the internal affairs of teachers' associations.

The NLTA will continue to join with teacher associations around the world to advance the cause of education in a peaceful and open environment, free from violence, discrimination and harassment.

On the home front, we will be exchanging opening packages with government with the commencement of negotiations scheduled for September 24-26. Following that series of meetings, Provincial Executive and Joint Council will confer and we will then schedule meetings throughout the 51 branches of the Association (alone or in combination). At the branch meetings we will provide a detailed analysis of both the NLTA and government's opening positions and anticipate that this will occur during the first half of October.

We will be actively pursuing a number of improvements in various articles and clauses in our Collective Agreement including family, personal and professional development leave; preparation time; alternative models of student supervision; salaries and allowances; and areas related to the new teacher allocation model and new and ongoing initiatives in ISSPs/Pathways affecting teacher workload. We will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the accepted recommendations of the two Commission Reports and will also have representation on the government committees which have originated from the provisional acceptance of other recommendations. These review committees include guidance, educational psychology, departmental head status for special education and the categorical support model and related special education issues.

As we move through the school year, ensure that you place those limits around your work life so as to better enhance your personal well-being. I encourage you to find that balance between work, home and personal pursuits so that your year is as healthy and satisfying as it can possibly be.

Sean

THE bulletin

Lesley-Ann Browne
Editor

Michelle Lamarche
Editorial Assistant

Linda Babstock, John Bishop, Elliott Green, Louise King
Design • Printing • Distribution

Linda Farrell
Online Services

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Tel: 709-726-3223; 1-800-563-3599
Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582
labrowne@nlta.nl.ca
www.nlta.nl.ca

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Advertising inquiries should be directed to:
Michelle Lamarche, Ext. 227
mlamarche@nlta.nl.ca

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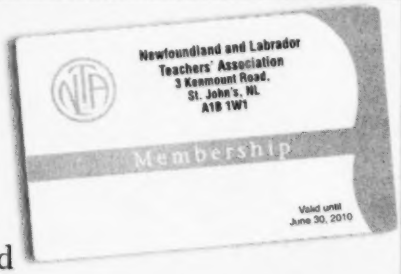
Important Notice for New Teachers

New Teacher Kits

If you **HAVE NOT** yet received your NLTA New Teacher Kit, please contact:

Susan Cardoulis
Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road
St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1
Tel: 726-3223, ext. 246 or 1-800-563-3599 (toll free)
scardoulis@nlta.nl.ca

Important Information for Teachers re: NLTA Membership Cards



If you have not received your NLTA membership card (which expires June 2010), please notify your NLTA School Representative or contact the NLTA office at mail@nlta.nl.ca or Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599 (toll free).

Teacher Discount Program

For a list of companies that offer discounts to members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, please visit the NLTA website at **www.nlta.nl.ca.** Click on "Publications" and scroll down to "D" for "Discount List for Teachers". You may need to show your NLTA membership card to obtain discounts.

If you are aware of any business(es) in your community that would be willing to offer a discount to teachers, please contact Lesley-Ann Browne, NLTA Communications Officer, labrowne@nlta.nl.ca or Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 228.

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

NAIN

Janeway fundraiser a huge success

"Hearts Off" to the K-12 students at Jens Haven Memorial School in Nain, Labrador for another great year of Janeway fundraising. The staff, students and their families raised a total of $2,237.84 in February 2008 through events such as staff Jeans Day, bake sales, classroom challenges, family challenges and Dress Up days.

The staff of Jens Haven Memorial would like to extend a special thank you to the families of the students. Without their support the school's Janeway fundraising efforts would not be the great success it has been. Since 2000, Jens Haven Memorial School has raised approximately $8,000 in support of the Janeway Hospital.

Primary students at Jens Haven Memorial School.

WESTERN BAY

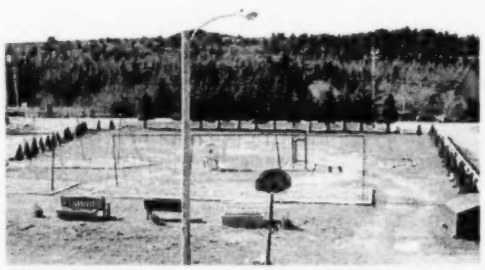
EnviroFest a worthwhile event

Wet weather conditions did not dampen spirits of the members of Cabot Academy's School community on June 2, as nearly 500 people showed up to celebrate EnviroFest 2008. A day of thunder, lightning and heavy rain showers turned to excitement as community members, students and special guests were treated to a tree planting ceremony to show a commitment to the environment. This tree planting ceremony was the final piece of the puzzle that saw the school playground area transformed into a safe and caring place for students to play, filled with vibrant colours and 41 newly planted cedar trees. Each tree was planted by friends and family members in memory/honour of loved ones from the local school community.

Newfoundland Power was the major corporate sponsor that helped fund the project. Newfoundland Power's commitment, along with the many community volunteers who came out in the five to six weeks prior to the event, allowed for the beautification project to be successful.

The evening was filled with guest speakers, songs, live entertainment, free food and drink, and prize draws from many of the environmentally friendly display booths set up around the gymnasium. The biggest prize draws were saved for the end of the night when one student name was drawn to win a Mountain bike and helmet, and another to win a 19 inch flat screen energy star television, provided by Newfoundland Power.

The Environmental Committee at Cabot Academy would like to extend a sincere thank you to all the volunteers, community businesses, organizations and staff members who helped make this event such a huge success. It would not have been possible without their help. A very special thank you is also extended to Newfoundland Power and their local representative, Sandra Reynolds, who provided Cabot Academy with the opportunity to host this worthwhile event.



Cabot Academy's playground area is transformed into a safe and caring place for students to play.

WITLESS BAY

School receives KSC Music Education Excellence Award

This past June, St. Bernard's Elementary School in Witless Bay and their music teacher, Carolyn Campbell, were awarded the Kodaly Society of Canada's Music Education Excellence Award. This award is given to elementary schools that apply for the award and meet criteria set by the Canadian Coalition for Music Education: all students in the school receive specialized instruction in music; the music teachers have specialized expertise in music and education; the music program incorporates quality traditional and composed music; and the students receive at least 60 minutes of quality music instruction per week. The school has been awarded a Music Education Excellence certificate for 2006-07 and gift certificates from music industry sponsors.

St. Bernard's Elementary offers an exemplary music program to its K-6 students, both in classroom music, choral music and instrumental. All primary students have three classes of classroom music in a cycle, or 90 minutes, including choir with their grade level. Choir is compulsory for Grade 1 to 3 students. They perform several times during the school year at assemblies, concerts, and the NLTA sponsored Christmas Suite. This year they had the honour of performing with five other school choirs and the well known ladies choir, Les Ms., in a concert called "Les Ms. and Children Join in Song". "As the youngest choristers on stage that day, they gave a beautiful performance and made us proud!," said Carolyn Campbell.

St. Bernard's elementary students have the same amount of time for classroom music as the primary. However, in addition to this, they have the option of choir, guitar or band. Grade 4 to 6 students who enjoy singing are encouraged to join choir. They meet twice in a cycle, once for sectionals and once with the full choir. This year they participated in Choral Connections at the MUN Music School. Both Grade 5 and 6 students have the option to join guitar or band. "We have a very active guitar club this year, with lots of enthusiasm," said Ms. Campbell. "Our Grade 5 and 6 band includes saxophones, clarinet, flute, brass and percussion. All of these groups have performance opportunities at school assemblies."

The Kodaly Society of Canada's Music Education Excellence Award program was instituted in 2003 by the KSC in response to cutbacks to music programs across Canada. Elementary music programs have been lost in every part of the country because of budget cuts, administrators giving preference to other subject areas, facility problems and sometimes because of a lack of qualified teachers. This year 15 schools from BC to Newfoundland applied for and received Music Education Excellence awards.

Denise Gagne, a director on the KSC Board of Directors, says that all too often, educational decisions are made based on the latest "trend" instead of being based on research that shows what aspects of education actually help children to learn most effectively. "The students in this school are truly fortunate to have an excellent music program, music teacher and supportive administrators."

MANUELS

Students experience human biology in hands-on activity

The students in the Biology classes at Holy Spirit High school in Manuels had the opportunity this past school year to experience human biology in a hands-on activity. The school extends special thanks to Dr. Shakti Chandra, an anatomist at Memorial University, for a visit to the school with an array of human specimens. Dr. Chandra carried out a discussion of all the human systems and allowed students to interact with her discussion. The students were totally amazed with the comparisons of diseased organs to healthy organs. At the end of the presentation the students were given 15 minutes to touch and feel the specimens as well as the opportunity to ask specific questions with respect to the structure, function and location of the human body parts. The students and teachers, Mr. Wells, Mr. Pretty and Mr. Kelsey all thanked Dr. Chandra and Memorial University for a very educational presentation.

Dr. Shakti Chandra amazes Holy Spirit High students with a comparison of diseased organs to healthy organs.

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR

2008 Ella Manuel Award winner announced

Katie MacKenzie

This past June, the Ella Manuel Award for 2008 was awarded to Grade 12 student Katie MacKenzie of Exploits Valley High School in Grand Falls-Windsor. Katie was selected from many excellent applications received from high schools around the province.

This is the twenty-third year in which the award has been given in memory of Newfoundland writer, broadcaster, peace activist and feminist Ella Manuel. The awards are made to young women graduating from high schools around the province to assist in their further education.

Katie is an outstanding student, active in school and community affairs. She is heading for a career in environmental engineering.

STEPHENVILLE

School wins young worker safety contest

On May 30, 2008, Stephenville High School was presented with the first place award for the 2008 SAFE Work Newfoundland and Labrador, Workplace Safety 3220 Radio Ad Contest.

The presentation was made jointly by the Honourable Shawn Skinner, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education and officials from the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC).

l to r) Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education; Leslie Galway, WHSCC CEO; Odelia Caul, Workplace Safety 3220 teacher; Stephen Smith, 3220 student; Stephanie Curnew, 3220 student; Greg Dollard, 3220 student; Honourable Shawn Skinner, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment; and Ralph Tucker, WHSCC Board Chair.

The radio ad contest was developed by the WHSCC to challenge high school students in Workplace Safety 3220 to put on their creative hats and come up with educational messages for young workers about the importance of safety in the workplace. The winning ad was created by Workplace Safety 3200 teacher Odelia Caul, students Stephanie Curnew, Stephan Smith and Greg Dollard.

"The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to making our province a safer place to work. Many students already work part-time during the school year and full-time in the summer," said Minister Skinner. "Raising awareness of workplace safety among high school students is vital. This radio ad contest is a unique opportunity for creative, enthusiastic students to express their vision and ideas on safety. The students at Stephenville High School are to be commended for their efforts in helping to increase awareness about workplace safety among their peers."

The workplace safety course is clearly an effective tool to educate our young people about the importance of safety on the job, helping to bridge the gap between school and the workplace," said Minister Burke. "When young people enter the workforce, they need to know the importance of workplace safety and the effects of workplace accidents on workers, their, families and communities. I congratulate the students of Stephenville High School for their efforts in bringing the safety message to their peers."

Stephenville High School was awarded a 42-inch, flat screen television and an audio visual library of occupational health and safety resources materials.

ST. JOHN'S

NLTA Staff Changes

The Provincial Executive Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is pleased to announce the appointment of **Don Ash** to the position of Assistant Executive Director, effective September 1, 2008.

Don has worked with the NLTA since 1998 as an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division. He has been responsible for such benefit areas as pensions and pre-retirement seminars, Group Insurance, issues relating to sick leave and disability benefits and deferred salary leave. He has served as Staff Consultant to the Group Insurance Trustees and has represented the NLTA on the Government/NLTA Group Insurance Committee, the Pensions Administration Committee and the Deferred Salary Leave Committee.

Don received his Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Education from Memorial University with a major in Mathematics in 1980 and a Masters of Business Administration from York University with a major in Organizational Behaviour/Public Administration in 1982. He also holds a Certificate in Industrial Relations from Queen's University.

Beginning his teaching career at Laval High School in Placentia in 1983, Don has 16 years of teaching and administrative experience including two years as Assistant Principal at Holy Spirit High School in Manuels. He has served as branch president for the Conception Bay South Branch of the NLTA and was a member of the NLTA Provincial Executive Council for 1997-98.

In his new role, Don will be responsible for coordinating the daily operations of the Benefits and Economic Services Division and will assist the Executive Director in the overall coordination of NLTA programs and services.

We are also pleased to announce that **Jim Murphy** has joined the staff of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association as Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre.

Jim has over 21 years of expertise and experience in the primary, elementary, secondary, district and departmental levels of the K-2 school system in Newfoundland and Labrador. He has expertise in web deployment and content development; Multimedia Learning Objects (MLO) development; strategic planning; distance learning course design, development and delivery; French language programming; new course implementation; and technology professional development. He is fluent in both official languages and teaches evening courses in French for Adults at the College of the North Atlantic. In 2007 he was recipient of the H.H. Stern National Award for innovation in second language teaching.

Throughout his career Jim has also been involved in numerous personal and professional activities that have enhanced his work history. He is a member of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT); a Learning Technologies Consultant with CASLT; a facilitator for technology planning for numerous schools; technology consultant on a variety of Community Access Projects; and has initiated web resources and content development for various groups such as CDLI and the Western Newfoundland Labrador School District.

Jim has a Masters of Education degree from the Université of Moncton with a concentration in Distance Learning and Technology, and a Bachelor of Arts with a French major and English minor from Memorial University. He has also completed courses and/or certificates in teaching French as a second language, computer assisted learning, designing educational systems, new tendencies in education, integrating technology in the classroom, as well as many others.

Jim can be reached at jmurphy@nlta.nl.ca.

On August 31, 2008, **Lloyd Hobbs** retired from his position as Assistant Executive Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Lloyd had been in this position since November of 2001 and was responsible for coordinating the daily operation of the Benefits and Economic Services Division and assisted the Executive Director in the overall coordination of NLTA programs and services.

Lloyd first began working with the NLTA in 1997 as an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division. During the past 11 years, and throughout his teaching career, Lloyd has worked tirelessly for the cause of teachers and education in this province.

Lloyd received his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1978. In 1982 he completed a Diploma in School Resources Services and in 1987 he completed a Master of Education in Educational Administration. In 2001 he obtained a Master of Business Administration. As well, he has completed seminars in Industrial Relations and Negotiation Skills at Queen's University.

Beginning his teaching career at Goose High School, Goose Bay in 1978, Lloyd has 19 years of teaching and administrative experience including two years at Jackson Walsh High School, Western Bay and 14 years at Persalvic Elementary School, Victoria. He served as a branch president for the Carbonear Branch on several occasions and was a member of the Provincial Executive Council for 1993-94.

On May 31, 2008, **Alex Hickey** retired from his position as Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre (VTC). Alex had been in this position since March of 2001 and was responsible for the coordination and management of the Virtual Teacher Centre as a vehicle for online professional development for teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador. Alex had served as the Coordinator of the VTC since it was established in 2001 and has led this initiative through its inception and development during the past seven years.

During his career, Alex worked at the primary, elementary, secondary, district and departmental levels of the K-12 school system as well as at the post-secondary level. He has expertise in curriculum management, planning, development, implementation and assessment combined with a background in

Don Ash

Jim Murphy

Lloyd Hobbs

Alex Hickey

teaching and administration. Alex is thoroughly familiar with contemporary issues in education including research on teaching and learning, teacher professional development, instructional design for adult learning, student evaluation, developmental needs of learners, technology integration, school construction planning, professional development, school development and assessment, school councils, role of parents in education, structural design of education systems, outcomes-based education, and educational change.

Before joining the staff of the NLTA, Alex was Director of Program Development with the Division of Program, Development, Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The President and Provincial Executive express sincere appreciation to Lloyd and to Alex for their hard work and dedication to teachers and to the Association. Best wishes to Lloyd and Alex in their retirements.

MDJH school grounds clean up

On May 29, 2008, students, staff and neighbours of Macdonald Drive Junior High (MDJH) joined together to clean up the grounds surrounding the school. The motto, "many hands make light work" certainly came into play as this group worked diligently to make the school grounds clean again! MDJH School Counsellor Joan McCue says Mrs. Squires and the Random Acts of Kindness Club initiated the clean up and are to be commended for getting that worthwhile activity in motion. "Thanks to all involved, our school grounds look great again!"

Students, staff and neighbours of Macdonald Drive Junior High join together to help clean up the school grounds.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Nominations sought for CEC Outstanding Achievement Award

The Newfoundland and Labrador Council for Exceptional Children promotes excellence in educational and community services for children with special needs and their families. In keeping with this goal, they are pleased to call for nominations for the annual Outstanding Achievement Award. This award is designed to acknowledge "outstanding contribution to the well-being of exceptional children and youth; innovation of teaching strategies; dedication to the integration of exceptional children; dedication to the creation of positive learning environments; and an ability to inspire students and co-workers". The award is designed to acknowledge the caliber of excellence for which our province is strongly recognized.

Individuals who are interested in nominating a local educator/practitioner are asked to contact Dr. Wayne Nesbit, CEC Awards Committee Chair (wnesbit@mun.ca), to obtain details and nomination forms. Nominations must be submitted by December 10, 2008.

Safe and Caring Schools Graduating Student Awards

The Provincial Advisory Committee for Safe and Caring Schools is pleased to announce the first recipients of the Safe and Caring Schools Graduating Student Award. The award is funded by the Department of Education and was created to recognize and promote student initiatives and leadership in promoting Safe and Caring Schools principles in their schools and/or communities. Eleven awards were available on a regional basis in the form of a $500 tuition voucher for post-secondary education.

The award recipients are:

- Eastern School District: Darrin Marsh (Southwest Arm Academy); Victoria Ralph (Carbonear Collegiate); Raven Warren (Bishops College); Andrew Peach (Marystown Central High)
- Nova Central School District: Carol-Anne Cramm (Baie Verte Collegiate); Julie Warren (Riverwood Academy)
- Western School District: Jeremy Gordon (Elwood High School); Lindsey Dolomount (Elwood High School); Jennifer Ingram (Burgeo Academy)
- Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial: Jasmine Felix (École Sainte-Anne)

[No applications were received from the Labrador School District]

All award recipients are to be congratulated for their achievements and encouraged to continue in their efforts to create and sustain more safe and caring environments in all their future endeavours. As there were a limited number of awards, school districts and Committee members would also like to congratulate the exceptional applicants who were not selected for one of the available awards.

The Committee resumes its work this school year and looks forward to continuing the Graduating Student Awards. Congratulations again to the award recipients!

Information and application forms for the Special Project Fund grants ($500 per grant), available to support applicable school and/or district based initiatives, will be sent to schools soon. Please note that the submission deadline will be set for early November 2008.

Confederation Building Daycare Centre provides quality care for children of NLTA employees

The Confederation Building Daycare Center is a non-profit workplace co-operative. This Center was established to provide quality care in a stimulating environment for the children of employees of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (including Eastern Health and the NLTA). Every dollar that comes into the Center is spent on the Center.

The Confederation Building Daycare Center offers the unique opportunity for parents to be directly involved in the quality of their children's care. As members of this cooperative, parents have a voice! They provide input and support to the Center in many ways... by being on the Board of Directors that administers the Center, through involvement on various committees, and by providing ongoing feedback. Parents are an integral part of this Co-operative.

The Center is licensed by the Department of Health and Community Services and complies with all the standards put forth in the Child Care Services Regulations. The staff are qualified Early Childhood Educators, whose primary concern is to provide an inclusive, loving, safe, healthy, and developmentally stimulating environment for all children who attend. The Center is licensed to care for up to 60 children aged two years to the end of Kindergarten.

The hours of operation are Monday to Friday, between 7:45 am and 5:30pm (summer hours 7:45am to 5:00pm).

For further information or if you wish to submit an application, please contact the Center's Managing Director, Ruby Thorne at daycare@gov.nl.ca or by calling (709)729-6038.

Dr. David Dibbon appointed as new Dean of Education

Dr. David Dibbon has been appointed as the new Dean of Education effective July 1, 2008. Dr. Dibbon had been the associate dean in Education since 2004. Prior to joining the faculty in the fall of 2000, Dr. Dibbon had a productive 20-year career in the public school system, working in the capacities of physical education and classroom teacher, assistant principal and principal. As the principal of one of the province's largest high schools, Bishop's College in St. John's, from 1991-1999 he was recognized, both locally and nationally, on three separate occasions for his innovative leadership.

Dr. David Dibbon

"Given that I have been actively involved in the public school and the university education systems for almost 30 years and I have been studying and researching leadership in education for more than a decade, I feel that I am well positioned to provide intelligent and pro-active leadership to the faculty and the university community," said Dr. Dibbon.

Dr. Dibbon is also a successful researcher who has published in the areas of: teacher education; teacher supply, demand and retention; new teacher induction, education reform; technology, innovation and change in education; teacher working conditions; organizational learning and educational leadership and; school-aged male underachievement.

He continues to be a strong supporter of public education and as the father of two young children is committed to research focused on making the school system a better place for students to learn and for teachers to work. He is involved, as a volunteer, in the university and the local community and has also served on the executive committees of his Rotary Club and the Eastern School District, where he was elected as a school board trustee.

"I am honoured that I will have this opportunity and to build on the exceptionally good work of my predecessor, Dr. Alice Collins," said Dr. Dibbon. "I am committed to working with my colleagues in the faculty as well as the university administration to advance the faculty as a national and global leader in education."

(Information for this item was taken from today.mun.ca)

WASHINGTON, DC

NL teacher selected to represent Canada at national conference

Lester Green

This summer, Lester Green, a junior/senior high teacher at Smallwood Academy in Gambo, had the honour of being selected by the Canadian Council for Geographic Education to represent Canada at a national conference on mapping offered by the National Geographic Society in Washington, DC. This conference is known as Geography Action! (GA!), an annual awareness program that assists educators in promoting the importance of geographic fluency across the United States and Canada. Each state sent a teacher representative, along with one from Puerto Rico and Mr. Green, the lone Canadian.

The Geography Action! training brings educators together to learn about ways to plan fun and exciting geography events in schools. The five regions covered are Africa, Asia, the Americas, Oceania, and Europe. This was the third year in the five-year program (2006-2011) where the GA! theme was *Mapping the Americas*.

Educators left the training with skills necessary to not only plan their own school-based geography events, but also to facilitate workshops for other teachers and schools on how to plan their own events during Geography Awareness Week, November 16-20, 2008 and throughout the school year.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Canadian Council for Geographic Education for their support and a very special thank you to Peggy March, Atlantic Representative for Canadian Council of Geographic Education," said Mr. Green.

If you would like to receive more information on Geography Awareness Week, please contact Lester Green at lestergreen@ncsd.ca.

MONCTON

NLTA President elected to CTF Board of Directors

At the 88th Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) in Moncton, New Brunswick in July, delegates elected a new President and executive committee, paving the path of the Federation's work for the coming year.

Mary-Lou Donnelly, President of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU), was elected President-designate. She will take office in July 2009, succeeding current President Emily Noble. The newly elected CTF Executive Committee includes: CTF President Emily Noble; CTF President-designate Mary-Lou Donnelly (NSTU); Calvin Fraser, CTF Secretary General; along with the following CTF Vice-Presidents: Sean Noah (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association); Frank Bruseker (The Alberta Teachers' Association), Jimmy Jacquard (Nunavut Teachers' Association), and Paul Taillefer (Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens).

2008-09 CTF Executive Committee (l-r): Calvin Fraser, Secretary General; Sean Noah, CTF Vice-President; Jimmy Jacquard, CTF Vice-President; Frank Bruseker, CTF Vice-President; Paul Taillefer, CTF Vice-President; Mary-Lou Donnelly, CTF President-designate; and Emily Noble, CTF President.

The CTF AGM is the highest legislative body of the national federation that is held every year to report on activities for the past year and determine priorities and activities for future years. The AGM engages the delegates of Member organizations in debate and discussion on key issues and resolutions that have an impact on public education, students and teachers nationally. The meeting also sets the Federation's priorities, budget and Member's fee, and elects the President and Executive for the organization.

CTF speaks for 220,000 teachers in Canada as their national voice on education and related social issues. CTF membership includes Member organizations in every province and territory in Canada as well as an Affiliate Member in Ontario. CTF is also a member of the international body of teachers, Education International.

Attention: Primary Teachers

If you would like to obtain a free copy of the nutrition resource *The ABC's of the Real Treat!* by author Samantha Gerbeau, please contact **sgerbeau@nf.sympatico.ca**.

CANADA

National Media Education Week gains partners and momentum in its third year

Media Awareness Network (MNet) and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) will join with collaborators and participants across the country to celebrate Canada's third annual National Media Education Week, November 3-7, 2008. The purpose of the week is to promote the importance of media literacy as a key component in the education of children and youth, and this year the focus is on encouraging young people to practice ethical behaviour when using new technologies.

MNet and the CTF are working with education organizations, libraries, and community parent-and youth-based groups to organize and promote a variety of media education events leading up to, and during the week, including: youth forums, media production workshops, classroom activities, panel discussions, parent information sessions, professional development workshops and conference presentations.

Among this year's collaborators are the National Film Board of Canada, Association for Media Literacy, Media Education Project (Guelph University), McGill University Faculty of Education, Canadian Association for Media Education Organizations, Ontario Library Association, Historica Encounters Canada, Pacific Cinematheque, London Public Library and the Prime Minister's Awards of Teaching Excellence.

For the second year, CTVglobemedia is the Presenting Sponsor of National Media Education Week, continuing its longstanding commitment to supporting media literacy initiatives in Canada.

In keeping with this year's theme, *Think Critically, Act Ethically*, MNet and the CTF have developed free resources for teachers and students to address the issue of cyber bullying and online harassment.

For more information on how you can take part in National Media Education Week 2008, visit the web site at: www.mediaeducationweek.ca or contact Media Awareness Network at: info@media-awareness.ca.

SAMUEL J. PITTMAN, 1925 - 2008

Samuel Pittman

Samuel J. Pittman passed peacefully away on June 22, 2008 at the age of 83. A retired principal, Sam spent 37½years in various teaching and administrative positions throughout the province. He began his teaching career in Harbour Buffett following World War II service in the army, after which he received his teacher training at Memorial University College. It was while teaching in Harbour Buffett from 1949-54 that he met and married a young teaching colleague, Ivy (Ingram) Pittman.

Sam's illustrious teaching career after leaving Harbour Buffett included administrative positions in Carbonear, Port aux Basques, Bay Roberts, Hearts Content and Whitbourne. His lifelong love of learning led him to further his education, receiving Arts and Education degrees.

Sam was passionate about the teaching profession and dedicated his time and talents to promote and foster professional growth in education. He was a long time member of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association at the local and provincial level, serving for many years on the provincial executive. He was a member of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, serving as a delegate to national conferences. Sam was involved with MUN Extension Services, coordinating off-campus evening courses.

Sam was very active in his church, serving as lay reader for many years. He was also active in municipal politics and was a volunteer firefighter as well as a charter member of the Whitbourne Lions Club and an Army Cadet leader.

Left with loving memories are his wife of 56 years, Ivy, and children Jim, Randy and Lorene and families.

(*Submitted by Lorraine Pittman.*)

A New School Year

by EDWARD HANCOCK

As you read this, the new school year is already several weeks old and you are well into the usual cycle of events that characterizes each school year. To each and every one of you, a sincere welcome back and I hope you were able to relax and enjoy some "down time" during the summer. A special welcome back is extended to our new teachers and first-time members as you begin what I hope will be a positive and successful career in education.

Your Association has continued to be active during the summer break, pursuing ongoing issues and preparing for a new school year. We have also had some staff changes during the latter part of the last school year and over the summer. Lloyd Hobbs, NLTA's Assistant Executive Director, has retired and Don Ash now occupies that position. Alex Hickey, Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre, retired in late May and Jim Murphy has been hired as the VTC Coordinator. More details on these staff changes can be found elsewhere in this edition of *The Bulletin*.

We know that the coming school year will be a busy one for all of you, as every school year proves to be. This year promises to be a busy one for your Association as well. Provincial contract negotiations are scheduled to get underway with the exchange of opening proposals between the NLTA's and the employer's bargaining teams on September 24-26. NLTA policy requires that a series of branch meetings will then be arranged to provide a summary of the opening proposals to all teachers. The Association's opening proposals were finalized and approved by Executive last April based upon the priorities established through the usual consultations with members and through Joint Council. We invite you to become familiar with the proposals through the upcoming branch meetings and the detailed document which will be provided to you, and that you keep up-to-date on activity on the negotiations front through our regular *Bargaining Briefs*.

The Association will be continuing to closely monitor the implementation of the two key reports received by government last year; ISSP/Pathways and Teacher Allocations. We will continue our ongoing liaison with the Department and provide input on both these fronts, as we clearly recognize their critical importance to classroom teaching and learning conditions and to teachers' work lives. Government's response to both these reports has certainly represented positive developments for education in this province. The new approach to ISSP/Pathways and the new Teacher Allocation Model both represent major changes in these two key areas. If we are to continue to make progress, even greater attention and resources will have to be devoted to them. This year, as we see the full implementation of initiatives in both of these areas, we will hopefully start to realize the positive results.

For your Association, this coming year is also a year in which you will elect a new President and Vice-President for the 2009-11 term. That election will take place in February 2009 and, as it has since 2003, will involve a vote among all teachers in the province. The province-wide voting process presents a challenge to each and every one of you to become involved, to be aware of the issues and knowledgeable about those who are offering themselves for positions of leadership in the NLTA, so that you are making an informed decision when you cast your ballot. We will do everything in our power to get information on the candidates to you.

As we move quickly into another school year, let us remember that this Association is its teachers. The Association's structures, activities and priorities exist to serve teachers. While there will obviously be differences of opinion among individual members as to what those priorities and activities and directions should be, the Association's governance structures (Biennial General Meeting, Executive, Joint Council, branches) are designed to direct the Association in a democratic fashion. To influence that direction, it is important that individual members be informed and be involved. I invite you to consider taking a more active role in your Association as this year begins.

On behalf of all the NLTA Staff, I offer you sincere best wishes for a successful year. Remember that your staff team here at the NLTA office are committed to providing you with the best possible levels of service and representation at all times. Have a great year!

Edward Hancock is Executive Director of the NLTA.

Important Information for Teachers Going on Maternity Leave

by STEFANIE TUFF

Teachers who meet the legislated eligibility requirements can access Employment Insurance maternity and/or parental benefits after the birth or adoption of a new baby. However, birth mothers may also be able to access their paid sick leave benefits for a reasonable recovery period following delivery.

Pursuant to Article 17 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Article 28 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement) teachers are entitled to a period of up to 39 weeks of unpaid maternity/adoption/parental leave. Birth mothers can claim Employment Insurance (EI) maternity benefits for the first 15 weeks of leave and EI parental benefits for the rest of the period of leave (EI parental benefits may be used by either parent or split between them, up to a combined maximum of 35 weeks of benefits). The distinction between EI maternity and parental benefits is that the 15 weeks of maternity benefits are only available to birth mothers as they are intended to provide a specific period of time to allow for physical recovery from pregnancy and childbirth. Pregnant women who are unable to work due to illness, whether the illness is pregnancy related or not, may access their paid sick leave prior to commencing maternity leave or applying for EI sickness benefits.

Judicial and arbitration decisions in other Canadian jurisdictions have established that birth mothers are entitled to access any regular paid sick leave benefits available to them through their employment for a certain period of time following delivery. In Brooks v. Canada Safeway (1989), 59 D.L.R. (4th) 321, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that pregnancy and childbirth provide "a perfectly legitimate health-related reason for not working and as such should be compensated" by the employer's short term disability or paid sick leave plan. In a subsequent case involving the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the Ontario Court of Appeal followed this reasoning and held that the provisions of a collective agreement prohibiting access to sick leave benefits for a period of time surrounding childbirth were discriminatory. The arbitrator in another case involving an Ontario school board went so far as to rule that birth mothers should be entitled to an automatic six week period of paid sick leave following delivery without the necessity of medical proof of illness.

In light of these decisions, the NLTA has taken the position that any teacher who gives birth is entitled to access paid sick leave for a reasonable recovery period following the delivery of her baby, providing she has the necessary sick leave available and meets all other requirements of the Collective Agreement. This position was first communicated to teachers in the January/February 2003 edition of *The Bulletin* and, with the exception of one grievance which was resolved in the teacher's favour, the experience has been mainly positive. Responses from school boards to teachers' requests to access paid sick leave following delivery have been fairly consistent: teachers are being advised that, if they have the necessary medical documentation, paid sick leave for a reasonable recovery period (in most cases, six weeks) will be approved. Teachers who wish to avail of this option should, when requesting maternity leave, inform their school boards that they plan to access paid sick leave for a reasonable recovery period following the birth and that a medical note for this period will be provided. Of course, it is up to each individual teacher to decide if she wants to take advantage of this option. From a financial perspective, a period of sick leave with full pay and benefits is more attractive than EI benefits. However, teachers who are at an early stage in their careers or who otherwise do not have a lot of sick leave available may feel it is more important to save their sick days in case of future illness.

If you have any questions in relation to a maternity/sick leave request, please contact an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division. As well, the publication "Going on Maternity Leave" is available on the NLTA website and provides essential and helpful information for teachers, including a sample maternity/sick leave request letter and a checklist of "to do" items for teachers going on maternity leave.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence

On May 15, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced the recipients of the 2007-08 Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence. "Today we celebrate the teachers who have gone above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of young Canadians," said the Prime Minister.

A total of 95 Prime Minister's Awards were presented to educators from across Canada. The recipients represent Canadian teaching excellence in a wide range of subjects at all grade levels, from pre-school through secondary school. All are recognized as having developed innovative ways to teach – including groundbreaking uses of information and communication technologies – to enhance their teaching practices.

The Awards, offered at the Certificate of Excellence (national) and Certificate of Achievement (regional) levels, carry cash prizes of $5,000 and $1,000 respectively. Financial awards are issued to the recipient's school to be spent under the recipient's direction.

"Every Canadian has a special memory of a teacher who helped or inspired them to realize their potential," said the Prime Minister. "This award honours the talented and caring teachers in this country whose contribution to the lives of individual Canadians, and to Canada as a whole, is truly priceless.

Jean Murphy is presented with her Certificate of Excellence Award by Prime Minister Stephen Harper at an awards ceremony in Ottawa in May.

Jean Murphy, a teacher at Long Range Academy in Cow Head, was presented with one of 16 Certificates of Excellence.

Jean teaches Numeracy in Kindergarten to Grade 6, mathematics in Grades 7 to 9 and technology in Grade 7. Jean introduced students to academic success in a community where academic achievement was not always a priority. She has overseen a significant rise in marks on standardized tests, which had historically been low. For example, her mathematics students perform above provincial levels in 14 out of 15 domains. She was appointed Numeracy Support Specialist to provide professional development support to other staff. Jean brought information and communications technologies to the school, supported by a GrassRoots grant, and has been expanding her efforts ever since. She has also lobbied hard to make the new technology available to primary and elementary grades.

Jean says a mistake is not a mistake if you fix it and an incorrect answer is an opportunity to demonstrate problem-solving skills. She believes in providing a flexible teaching and learning environment with lots of group work and critical discussion. Jean also feels strongly about involving parents and providing support for both students and parents outside regular school hours.

A former principal of Jean's said, "Ms. Murphy has made a significant contribution to education in this province, to the lives of the children she has taught and to the communities in which she has worked and volunteered... In every conversation I have had with Ms. Murphy, she always seems to have a default position regarding education and teaching. She always goes back to same fundamental question, "How will this benefit students and how will it increase achievement?"

Five teachers from Newfoundland and Labrador also received Certificates of Achievement. They are:

Mark Bonnell is a teacher at Eric G. Lambert School in Churchill Falls. He teaches Music in K-12, computer technology in Grade 11, and religious education and technical education in Grades 6 to 9.

Approximately 15 to 20 of Mark's students take the Royal Conservatory of Music examinations every year with a pass rate of about 97 percent; with about half the students receiving honours. He has organized and led a variety of large projects, including 17 musicals, two musical plays in the larger community and twice yearly concerts and recitals. Mark also worked closely with the school's drama teacher on seven plays.

Mark believes we should make music courses student-centered and student-driven; students give input into repertoire selection and performance decisions and all projects are treated as problem-solving exercises in which student input and direction is required. He immediately saw the potential of new technology for teaching music.

James Duffett teaches Biology in Grades 10 to 12 at Queen Elizabeth Regional High School in Foxtrap.

James has spent the last several years developing a major evaluation project recently described in the journal *Connections*. The new evaluation method seeks to provide more support for those students who have not received satisfactory marks the first time round. Not simply a second chance, the approach requires a serious commitment from students, including attending tutorials, before they can retake a test. He is also one of the first teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador to use a Tablet PC to teach biology.

James feels educators should make extensive use of multimedia presentations, draw on outside resources offered by institutions such as universities and medical schools and bring in guest speakers to excite students' interest and make them aware of the crucial role biology plays in the world. He believes sound evaluation processes that offer detailed analyses to students must back up good teaching.

Jeanne O'Brien is a teacher at Holy Heart High School in St. John's. She teaches English and Novel Cinema in Grades 7 to 11.

Jeanne developed and introduced Newfoundland and Labrador's first film studies course, Novel Cinema, that takes advantage of intersections between film and literature. Five other schools in the province now use this course. She is also leading students in a project to develop a documentary film for the 50th anniversary of Holy Heart High School. This project will involve students in all aspects of filmmaking: funding, writing, researching, filming, editing and promotion.

Jeanne believes in using music, film, popular culture, photography and art to develop student interest in the study of literature. She says we need to develop tools to allow students to evaluate their learning as well as the merits and shortcomings of courses anonymously.

Jennifer Scurlock teaches Art in Grades 10 to 12 at Holy Heart High School in St. John's.

Jennifer has directed the Screen Arts Student Festival, a festival of film and new media open to high school students from across Canada, for the past five years. The festival, which Holy Heart hosts and is run by students and funded by the community, accepts entries in English and French. Her students have won awards for art or film from, among others, Industry Canada, Heritage Canada, Newfoundland-Labrador Human Rights Association, Memorial University, CIDA, the provincial Protected Areas Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts and Letters Competition.

Jennifer believes in using a discovery, resource-based multiple intelligences approach to instruct students. She incorporates technology such as digital still and movie cameras, and graphic, photo and movie editing software in virtually every lesson plan.

Todd Sharpe is a teacher at Holy Heart High School in St. John's. He teaches Mathematics, International Baccalaureate mathematics and special services support in Grades 10 to 12.

Todd created student-oriented workbooks to help students in Grades 10 to 12 having difficulties in math. Students can use the workbooks to teach themselves and some covered the complete course material months ahead of time. The workbooks have received considerable praise and more than 10,000 copies have been sold to date. As special services support, he has worked to make all students feel comfortable in math class, including students struggling with the extra challenges posed by dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism and paralysis.

Todd believes in creating a stimulating environment by having students work in groups to solve problems and present their solutions to the class. He has students meet in groups to identify and discuss each other's areas of difficulty and follow up with a class discussion about how to overcome these challenges.

Mark Bonnell

James Duffett

Jeanne O'Brien

Jennifer Scurlock

Todd Sharpe

CAHPERD Physical Education Teaching Excellence Award

Loyola Fitzpatrick

Loyola Fitzpatrick, a Physical Education teacher at Cowan Heights Elementary in St. John's has recently been honoured with a PETE (Physical Education Teaching Excellence) Award for 2007-08 by the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD) and Wintergreen Phys.Ed.

The Physical Education Teaching Excellence Award honours up to 13 exceptional teachers (one per province and territory) for their excellence in teaching physical education and their ability to motivate children and youth to participate in physical activity. This Award is the only national award in Canada that recognizes physical education teachers for their hard work and dedication in helping to build strong, healthy and physically active children.

Loyola believes all children have the ability and the right to achieve success in physical education. Some of his contributions to physical education include mentoring university students, coaching his students in cross country running, continuing professional development and contributing to curriculum development at the provincial level. He also runs very active intramural programs during lunch hour as well as after school every day. One of his most significant programs to Cowan Heights is his provincially known skipping program. This program has been featured on CBC, CSA Skipper and in *The Telegram*.

Council for Exceptional Children Outstanding Achievement Award

In May, **Jo-Ann Baggs**, a Special Education Teacher at Cowan Heights Elementary in St. John's, was presented the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Outstanding Achievement Award for her dedication and exemplary contribution to the lives of the many special needs children whom she has taught over the years. To her teaching colleagues Jo-Ann epitomizes what a special educator should be. She has stood up for the rights of disadvantaged students and challenged those who appeared less tolerant of exceptionalities.

Throughout her career as a teacher Jo-Ann has always embraced learning and has served as an advocate to ensure that each individual's needs are met with empathy and respect. As proclaimed by a fellow teacher, "If I had been the parent of a child with an exceptional need, Jo-Ann would top the list for my choice of teacher". This is the sixth year that the Newfoundland & Labrador Council for Exceptional Children has recognized educators who have achieved excellence in their profession.

Pictured (l-r): Wayne Neskit (CEC), Jo-Ann Baggs, Brenda Smith (CEC) and David Philpott (CEC)

Outstanding Aboriginal Educator Award

In July, **Dr. Edwina Wetzel** was presented with the 2008 Outstanding Aboriginal Educator Award at the 88th Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Teachers' Federation in Moncton, New Brunswick. This award is presented to a teacher who has demonstrated leadership in Aboriginal education and excellence in teaching that reflects an Aboriginal culture.

Dr. Wetzel was born in Conne River, Bay d'Espoir, Newfoundland and received her early education in her home community. She received her Bachelor of Education from Memorial University and also attended the Universities of Alberta and Oklahoma for specialized courses.

She returned to her home community in 1971 to teach and was the first Micmac to teach in the Conne River School since 1910. At the time the Micmac tribal council was being re-organized and she ensured through her participation that education was given a high priority. She played a major role in lobbying the federal government for a new high school in Conne

River and when it was built in 1976 she was the obvious choice for principal. It was under her leadership that the Micmac culture was integrated into the school system and there was an increase in the number of students completing programs and continuing to post-secondary education.

Dr. Wetzel was appointed Director of Education for the Conne River Indian Band in 1986 and just recently retired from this position. In this role she coordinated adult education, managed post-secondary student aid, organized counselling services, developed culturally relevant curriculum, and developed both literacy and cultural resources at Conne River. She has also been involved in advisory councils on early childhood and women's issues, and was a member of the Liaison Committee for School Boards and the Central Newfoundland Community College. She received an Honourary Doctor of Laws degree from Memorial University in 1993 for her work in the field of Education and the Development of the Mi'kmaw All Grade School system in Conne River, and was made an Honorary Member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association in 1995.

NLTA President Sean Noah and CTF President Emily Noble (far right) present Dr. Edwina Wetzel with the 2008 Outstanding Aboriginal Educator Award.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association would like to congratulate all winners on their outstanding achievements.

The Best Day of Life

by CLAUDETTE E. S. COOMBS

What is our best day? Think about it. At the end of the day, if we take time to quietly reflect in solitude, what really determines whether or not we judge a day as being good? If we think it is receiving only good news, not having conflict, making progress with challenging situations and feeling well, then we lose the opportunity to really take control of our own happiness and we unnecessarily limit our pleasure in living.

Certainly, having things go just the way we plan, not having complications and experiencing success will make it a lot easier to enjoy the day. It will even give us that extra boost of energy to use in areas of personal satisfaction. However, even when life doesn't seem fair, we can still choose to have a "good day".

Often we let "life happen to us". We don't like the situations, options or outcomes. We recognize that life is unfair and for this day, we choose to ignore how we can make it better. That choice is ours. With a little, or sometimes a lot, more effort we can make this day "the best day of our lives"! If that sounds like it would require the proverbial magic wand, let's explore what it means and how we create the best day of our lives.

How Can We Create our Best Day?

For most of us, most of the time, we have the potential to create positive experiences in each day. If we want happiness, we are able to make it! That doesn't mean that we make all the pain of life disappear, but it does mean that we can choose to focus on the flowers, the rainbows, the pleasant side of relationships and the uplifting music. If these things aren't readily visible, we can actively look for, or produce them. This is our choice. Well, that's all fine to say, but can that really happen or is this just another theory? Do *you* need proof? Surely we can think of adequate evidence to support the opposite conclusion – that there are plenty of things we can think or do to make our days worse! If you have ever turned to music to console you during a sad time, particularly at the end of a relationship, you quickly learn that most country music songs don't fit the job! So, what does? How do we conquer the negative parts of life and focus on the joyful elements to make this the best day of our lives? We only need to look at our personal resiliency behaviours to find out.

There are many examples in our, as well as our friends', behaviours. After recovering from breast cancer, one friend bought a bunch of fresh flowers every week for display in her living room. It was her reminder of the beauty that continues to exist. She chose not to live in fear and worry but instead to surround herself with life and hope. Another teacher, after his teenage son died, spent a great deal of time providing fatherly support to many of his son's friends. He chose not to become bitter and angry and always sad. That isn't the easy option. However, it is the option that offers the most for those who wish to find, and enjoy, the positives that co-exist with pain and despair.

Planning for the Best

Pleasant things do sometimes happen unexpectedly. Nevertheless, if we don't want to leave that to chance, we know that it is up to us to make some things happen. We have to plan, prepare, then take specific actions, to "guarantee" our desired outcome. (You are correct. There is not much in life that is guaranteed, but we all know that there are actions under our control that increase the probability of specific outcomes. We can use that to our advantage.)

Consider that special lifetime dream that we envision. How do we make it happen and when it does occur, how do we ensure that it is the best that it can be? The first step is definitely PLANNING. We think about what is needed, taking into account all the minor details and developing an image of what that dream will look like.

The next step is PREPARATION. Putting things in place, collecting resources, drawing on supports, and building in the "just in case" options. Every dream and every plan will likely require different preparations which are unique to its goals and needs.

After we have those tasks clearly identified, well defined and confirmed, we do a further check to ensure that we have covered OBSTACLES. There are some obstacles that we are almost certain to face, oth-

ers are possibilities. Yet the more we anticipate and plan a strategy for addressing obstacles, the greater the probability that we will achieve our dream. We can use a road trip image to depict our linear movement through time to achieve that goal. For some obstacles we need to blast out a pathway, like that through the West Coast mountains where progress had been previously prevented in completing the Trans Canada Highway. For other obstacles we need to find a way over or around them. Sometimes we need that bridge to get over the many rivers in the Central part of our Island. We use tools, skills and perseverance to just get through some of the obstacles, like the East Coast fog! When all of these aren't adequate, we have to be more creative and incorporate the obstacles into our plan. We use boats and ships to maneuver the sea and the rivers to allow boat transportation to, and throughout, Labrador. However, when the water turns to ice, snowmobiles and sleds offer a new mode of transportation along the same path.

Whether we are relying on the skills and resources of others (demolition or construction), or our own skills and ingenuity (persistence, knowledge, imagination), we are more successful in overcoming obstacles when we view them as challenges to our creativity, rather than challenges to our patience, tolerance and balance.

The final, and possibly most critical, step to ensuring that we have a good day, is the DECISION and perseverance to do just that. We will have a good day, even our best day, despite the difficulties of life happening all around us! When we make this decision, and stick with it, we are as close as possible to "guaranteeing" the best day! Without making that decision, we leave ourselves, and our happiness, open to the whims of chance.

Because life isn't just history; because it opens up so much potential; because it allows one more opportunity to correct mistakes or mend a hurt; because there is another chance to re-establish priorities; because it places before us the prospect of achievement; because we can redefine goals and direction; because there are a few more hours to complete unfinished tasks … because of all of this and so much more, the best day of life is always TODAY!

Claudette Coombs is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

Online Collaborative Learning Communities

by JIM MURPHY

What are ICLTs? They are Information, Communication and Learning Technologies and they influence every aspect of everyday life. Banking, communicating, shopping and learning have undergone dramatic shifts in the past decade and continue to evolve at breakneck speeds. Institutions offer "distributed learning" as opposed to direct face-to-face learning; click and pay shopping is a daily activity for those who have embraced the digital world; text messaging, e-mail and "Facebook" have moved communications from "real time" to "my time"; and banks offer as many or more services by phone or the Web than in person.

So where does this leave students and educators?
Students, primarily teen and college, latch on to ICLTs naturally and readily. They embrace the technologies; use them, and then move on to the next. For example, Facebook is the leading social networking site based on monthly unique visitors, attracting 132.1 million unique visitors in June 2008 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook). Furthermore, cell phone text messaging has increased exponentially in the last number of years and has become the newest challenge for educators. It is the current communications medium of choice for the teenage generation.

Students seek and enjoy means of networking on a social level, but also network on a more collaborative level. Completing homework assignments via MSN is commonplace and necessary in their world. So how is this different from calling a friend or getting together to discuss an assignment? Well, for one, the Web is at their fingertips and solutions to problems are often found with a quick Google. Secondly, students "love" to share their findings, provide solutions for other students and collaborate on problem solving. They can and will scan and send notes, labs and solutions to problems using their technical expertise. (You must realize that the test over which you ardently worked last year is now scanned and available to every student in the province through some network somewhere!) They will post them to forums, blog about them, build sites based on them, and share their "WIKI" (What I Know Is...) with whomever would like access. I have witnessed this many times over; old labs and assignments circulated, recycled and reused repeatedly. To the student, collaboration is the key to success. If I do not know the answer, then someone will, or there is a WIKI out there somewhere with a solution.

What is a Collaborative Learning Community?
The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, defines collaboration as the ability: "To work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort." ICLTs have created opportunities to network with peers like never before: "Collaboration between learners via the Internet encourages the building of unique online learning communities that unite learners and teachers all over the world. These learning communities could be local or global, different in number of participants and objectives, and diverse, linguistically, culturally, academically. However, they all share the following specific features: common interests and self-regulation, informal ties and community identification. The dominating processes within the online learning communities are collaboration through peer-to-peer communication, trust building, and information and knowledge sharing. Community-building efforts seem to be a promising approach to enhancing the quality of collaborative learning environments and distance courses." (www.iienetwork.org/?p=41543)

So, is there a place where educators can collaborate online?
The preceding illustration of the "student collaborative community" serves as an example of students taking advantage of ICLTs to enhance opportunities to network with peers. To varying degrees, many of us participate in collaborative learning communities directly in our own schools in face-to-face consultations or in our communities. But what of an online

community for educators; one where we can post thoughts and documents, call on experts, blog, contribute to forums or offer and seek counsel on a myriad of professional issues that arise in schools and classrooms? Is this plausible and possible?

Many such communities currently exist. The following is a short list of sites available that provide opportunities to collaborate with other educators:

- EDNA, an Australian based education network, provides educators with services and opportunities such as those previously mentioned. (www.edna.edu.au/edna/go).
- Epals is a collaborative learning community with a twist, offering opportunities to interact with teachers and their classrooms. Actually, this site also offers great secure email. (www.epals.com/)
- Teachers.net offers a collaborative network where educators can engage in meaningful collaborative exchanges by grade, subject or level. (http://teachers.net/)
- LearningTimes – A collaborative network offering access to a variety of online learning communities. (http://home.learningtimes.net/)
- Tapped In is a global educational collaborative platform that allows users free virtual office space. (http://tappedin.org/tappedin/)

But I want to be able to access colleagues in my own backyard. Where can I go for this?

First of all, many of the districts here in this province offer opportunities to network through FirstClass and other conferencing clients. There are conferences and groups of which you may currently be a member. Here, teachers interact within their districts through direct messaging, mail, and user conferences. These are great starting points to becoming active in an online collaborative network. However, currently, these networks are closed and only available to personnel within that district and so it can limit the opportunities to collaborate beyond the district level.

How can I collaborate with other educators in the province and beyond?

The aforementioned sites will certainly allow you to access peers in the global sense. They provide opportunities to interact with peers from anywhere. On a more local level, the NLTA has many active Special Interest Councils (SICs) that may provide you with opportunities to collaborate with colleagues (www.virtualteachercentre.ca/sic/). As well, the Virtual Teacher Centre (www.virtualteachercentre.ca), in conjunction with the NLTA and CDLI, is currently building new offerings for teachers, and this will include a new collaborative learning sphere. Here, educators will be able to easily connect to others in the province and beyond and collaborate using a variety of platforms similar to those available on many currently existing sites.

Where are we going from here?

A successful collaborative learning community will take time to evolve. However, research indicates that the most successful professional development opportunities for educators are ones where they have opportunities to collaborate with peers beyond their schools.

"...78% of the teachers perceive that they learn a great deal from professional development sessions that allow them to collaborate with teachers who have similar teaching assignments in other schools. In light of that information, the need for professional development beyond one's own school becomes quite apparent." (Sheppard, 2008)

Imagine the possibilities, then, of connecting with a colleague beyond the school, the district or the province, and deliberating over best practices, sharing documents and networking with your peers. Stay tuned...

Jim Murphy is Coordinator of the NLTA Virtual Teacher Centre. He can be reached at jmurphy@nlta.nl.ca.

A Gift from Nicholas

by BEVERLEY PARK

The week before school opened I ran into a friend of mine whose son was about to enter Grade 2. While mom and I talked the young boy stood by politely. I thought I ought to bring him into the conversation so I asked the typical: "What grade are you going into? And what school?" As he told me those details mom added as a subtext that he was not, in fact, all that thrilled about the prospect of school and neither he nor she was looking forward to September 5. I feigned shock. With a look of total surprise I started in on a series of "Are you kidding? You're going to *that* school? You're in *that* class? You have *that* teacher? You have to be one of the luckiest boys I know! Didn't you hear? Of all the classes, all the teachers, all the schools in the city, in the province – maybe even in the whole country – THAT is THE best! WoW!

"Nicolas' Grade 2 teacher likely had no idea that he went to school that morning *expecting* to see the very best teacher on the planet!"

As I spoke I could see the change in that little boy. I hoped that my antics might have some effect – if even briefly to give my friend a break. I walked away and forgot about it. Fast forward to a week later and I am checking my voice messages. The disembodied voice on the machine says: "You have six new messages and four saved messages." There were the typical messages and requests for call backs, and then this little voice that, by the way, is now one of my "saved" messages. "Hi, this is Nicholas. You were right. Grade 2 *is* great. I love it."

Aside from the warm feeling from that little voice I was also given something else…an awareness that sometimes we have to re-create our reality. In previous articles I have dealt with the topic of self fulfilling prophecies – that idea that "If you think you can, or you think you can't, you're right." There are days when we are all like Nicholas – either because we know that what lies ahead of us is not of our choosing and we walk through the door of our school or classroom already defeated. Or, despite the fact that we do not know what is ahead, we have made up our minds that it won't be good!

I know that you are likely thinking that life isn't as simple as a conversation with a 7 or 8 year-old. You're absolutely right. It isn't as simple because it is a conversation with yourself. People can tell you to have a good day. People can tell you to feel better. Only you can make it happen. And among the many, many encounters we have, with dozens and dozens of people – students, parents, colleagues – sometimes we neglect the all important encounters with ourselves. Whether it is in the shower, or the last thing you do before you go out the door in the morning, or if the circumstance permits it, on the drive to school, take a moment to ask yourself what kind of day you will have; what kind of people you will meet; what kind of encounters you will experience. Your answers to those questions will influence what happens. Nicolas' Grade 2 teacher likely had no idea that he went to school that morning *expecting* to see the very best teacher on the planet! But because that was what he was looking for, that's what he found! That was (and is, for him) the reality! So if you are expecting to meet pleasant people and have positive encounters, you will! If you expect to meet obstructionists, everyone will seemingly get in your way.

A favourite quote of mine is that "all encounters between people will be humanizing or de-humanizing – and it will be the same for both." You cannot make someone feel good without also having some of the "feel good" spill over to you. You cannot humiliate or diminish someone without you yourself being diminished. *Didn't I use this last year in an article?*

I love serendipity and coincidence, small moments that can lead to big ideas. I love that I met Nicolas that day! I'm sure if you ask his mom, he's no Saint, but like Saint Nick, what he gave me that day was a gift.

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

2008 Pre-Retirement Seminar

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Please check which session you will be attending:

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- **Oct. 16-17** – Greenwood Inn, Corner Brook
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- **Nov. 6-7** – Holiday Inn, Stephenville
- **Nov. 13-14** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- **Nov. 20-21** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- **Dec. 4-5** – Holiday Inn, St. John's

Will your spouse be attending? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of spouse (if attending)

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Note:

- Teachers within two years of retirement (on or before June 2011) are eligible to attend.
- All participants must pre-register.
- You will receive confirmation prior to seminar.
- Travel costs will be paid according to policy and only to the nearest seminar.
- Teachers are advised to bring a calculator.

Please submit registration form to:

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Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
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Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 *(toll free)*

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Project Overseas 2008

A Life Changing Experience

by DARYL RIDEOUT

I was very fortunate this past summer to have been selected to participate in Project Overseas, a program offered by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) with the support of the NLTA. This is a program that allows Canadian teachers to travel throughout the world to offer Professional Development to our colleagues in developing countries. This year, there were 13 teams – 50 teachers in total, who traveled throughout the world. I was lucky to travel to Dominica, The Nature Isle of the Caribbean. I traveled with three other Canadian teachers, to work with our colleagues in the field of Information Communication Technology, Math, Music and Literacy.

The trip started with a four-day orientation in Ottawa, which was sponsored by CTF. Throughout the four days, we had many sessions that covered things like culture shock and on issues concerning working abroad under adverse conditions such as heat, poverty and disease. There was time for team building – a very important element when working and travelling with a group.

Our team then spent two days in Barbados en route to Dominica. We relaxed and got to know each other a little better and needless to say, we spent many hours on the beach! What a way to start this journey.

Upon arrival at Melville Hall Airport in Dominica, we were met by Francis, the Public Relations Officer for the Dominica Association of Teachers (DAT), who would be our driver for our visit to this beautiful island. From the moment we touched down to the final minutes of our stay, we were treated well by the Dominicans. Everyone was so appreciative of our efforts to help and we all felt very comfortable and honored to be there.

While we were in Dominica, we stayed in a very nice residence – a three-bedroom house that had mango, banana and star fruit trees in the back yard. Talk about FRESH FRUIT! We were very comfortable and well looked after by DAT. They took care of everything for us – from tours, to tips on what to do and what not to do, as well as making sure that we had everything we needed to deliver the programs that we had planned. We each worked with a local co-tutor who assisted us in the delivery of our courses. They too were very anxious to learn all they could from us.

We delivered our programs at Convent High School in Roseau, which was about a 10-minute drive from where we lived. The school was on the borders of the Botanical Gardens – quite a nice setting indeed.

Daryl Rideout with a group of Grade 6 students who were preparing for an entrance exam to junior high.

We had four days before we were to start our courses, and during that time, we met and planned with our co-tutors. We got to learn about our surroundings – locating the bank and the grocery store were our top priorities and we got to know some of the local people. There were several social functions arranged for us, which was greatly appreciated!

There were countless positive experiences during my four weeks abroad. The highlight was working with the teachers and helping them to develop skills that would allow them to integrate technology into their curriculum. They were inquisitive and very receptive to us working with them. I made lasting friendships from the group that I worked with. There was a very formal, not to mention elaborate, opening and closing ceremony, which was attended by many officials from the government. I was interviewed on the radio by DBS – the Dominica Broadcasting System. During the interview, listeners could call in to ask

questions about my role in Dominica and they were anxious to know my views on the education system there. We toured Dominica – a beautiful, unspoiled tropical island that has plenty of volcanoes, rain forests, sulfur springs and the most incredible people I have ever met. We had a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer for Education and we talked about what needs to be done to make the education system more effective. Our opinions and views were openly accepted and appreciated. We attended a cultural choral event that featured the Sixth Form Sisseau Singers, a well-known group of 36 singers who put on quite a show. I was impressed. I had the opportunity to travel to several other Caribbean Islands while I was away and all of it made for a most rewarding experience.

Living in a developing country and working with local people is a life changing experience. Seeing my colleagues work in the poor conditions that they do, and yet to still have the drive and motivation to help their students be the best that they can be is inspiring to say the least. Some of the teachers that I worked with had never received any sort of professional development, other than what I was offering and there were some teachers who had been teaching since the ages of 14 and 15. Most teachers did not have any formal training and they were quite eager to take in all I had to share with them. Not only did they learn from me – I also learned quite a lot from them. This experience has help me to see the bigger picture just a little more clearly – that helping our students feel good about themselves, to feel empowered and to be effective contributors to society can be achieved with very limited resources. These teachers are very dedicated even though they have very little to work with. They are proud to be teachers and they want the children in their care to be successful. Working with these wonderful teachers and hearing their stories has inspired me to continue to do my best as I work with my students.

I have been involved in many national and international projects throughout my 20 years of teaching but I have to say this project has been the best experience of them all. It allowed me to share my knowledge with fellow teachers who were so willing to listen, share and learn and I, in turn, learned so much as a result of my participation. It has also sweetened my appetite for working in developing countries in the field of education. I am sure there will be more experiences to follow.

I would like to thank the NLTA for their support and for allowing me to be a part of this project. Special thanks go to Beverley Park of the NLTA for her support and encouragement.

Daryl Rideout teaches at Vanier Elementary in St. John's.

Volunteer Overseas with CTF!

Would you like to assist teachers in a developing country? Are you interested in learning more about global education issues? Can you see yourself volunteering in Africa, Asia, or the Caribbean?

If yes, Project Overseas (PO) might be for you!

CTF needs English and French-speaking Canadian teachers at the primary, elementary, and secondary levels who are interested in volunteering to offer in-services in a wide range of subjects in countries throughout Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.

Each year about 50 Canadian teachers are chosen to volunteer on CTF's Project Overseas. On PO, Canadian teachers give their time and talent to offer professional development in-service programs in partnership with teacher organizations in developing countries. Based on requests from CTF's partners overseas, teams of Canadian teachers are formed in January and in-service projects take place in July and August.

Application criteria include:

- be a member of a provincial or territorial teacher organization that supports PO;
- hold a valid teacher's certificate;
- have completed at least five years teaching in Canada by July 2009;
- be a Canadian citizen;
- be in excellent health and able to work in developing country conditions (a doctor's letter is required);
- show evidence of flexibility, mature judgment, and a strong willingness to put the team and project needs above personal needs;
- hold a Canadian passport valid until at least December 2009, at the time of application (proof that a passport application has been made will be accepted).

PO is a volunteer experience. Administrative, travel and living expenses are borne by CTF, provincial and territorial teachers' organizations (which are CTF members), CIDA, and the Wild Rose Foundation. No salaries or honoraria are paid to participants in PO and the sponsors do not cover costs associated with substitute teachers or release time.

TO APPLY:

Further information and application forms are available from:
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599 (toll free in province)
Fax: 726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582 (toll free in province)

Deadline date for applications: **November 7, 2008**

Inclusive Education

Issues at the System Level

by CAROLYN WHEELER SCOTT

In the 1970s I attended a three stream urban school. My classmates and I were sorted into three different hierarchical classes and, for the most part, we remained in our "streams" through high school. However, when I started my teaching career in the early 90s the tide was turning towards mixed ability teaching and the structure of urban classrooms began to change. As the model of "streaming" and segregation was left behind, it soon became evident that teachers were feeling overwhelmed in dealing with the diversity in their classrooms.

Not much has changed in the intervening decade. *Focusing on Students: The ISSP and Pathways Commission Report* (2007) wrote that "overwhelmingly, teachers are calling for training in how to understand and accommodate the diverse learning needs of students" (p. 113). The commission further stated that "the effectiveness of teachers in meeting the needs of diverse learners will be enhanced through the provision of appropriate teaching resources and strategies" and that "teachers need to be trained in differentiated instruction so as to accommodate effectively the needs of all students in today's diverse learning environments" (p. 67). But what does this mean? What is differentiated instruction? What resources are needed to support it?

Differentiated instruction is an instructional theory that promotes the success of all students. Teachers take into account diverse student factors when planning and delivering instruction and they structure the learning environment to address a variety of learning styles, interests and abilities.

A variety of instructional and management strategies support differentiated instruction and include multiple intelligences, Bloom's taxonomy, cooperative learning, anchor activities, graphic organizers, varied text, literature circles, tiered lessons, learning contracts, independent study, varied homework, compacting, and so on.

Learning the theory of differentiated instruction and its many supporting strategies is not an overnight process. The topic is vast and will require ongoing professional development and gradual classroom implementation. Teachers will require a number of years to move from novice to expert practitioners in this area.

Teacher training is not the only resource a school system may use to support a diverse student population. Important for effective implementation of differentiated instruction is a curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of inclusive classrooms. The ISSP and Pathways Commission "envisions a model of support that ... has a curriculum framework that reflects the principles of universal design and is staffed by teachers who are skilled at differentiating instruction" (p. 118).

"Empowering the classroom teacher requires a shift in how we structure support services in schools."

Universal design for learning is the creation of instructional materials and methods that make learning goals achievable by students with a diverse range of abilities. Universal design is hallmarked by flexible curricular materials and alternative activities for students. "As much as possible these designed-in alternatives ... do not have to be added by teachers. However, effective use of the materials requires that the teacher be familiar with the various teaching strategies necessary to reach students of widely varying abilities" (Orkwis, 2003, p.1).

The ISSP and Pathways Commission calls "for a shift towards empowering the classroom teacher with resources, knowledge, and skills with which to differentiate instruction and create what will be acknowledged as inclusive environments" (p. 117). This does not mean that the classroom teacher "knows all" and "does all". The sheer volume of knowledge available in teaching and learning means no one individual can "know it all". Education, like other professions,

has developed areas of speciality to cope with the knowledge base. Our schools have access to speech language pathologists, educational psychologists, guidance counsellors, special education teachers, ESL teachers, itinerant teachers for the visually impaired, itinerant teachers for the hearing impaired, behaviour support specialists, itinerant teachers for numeracy, department heads, and so on. A classroom teacher cannot be expected to have the knowledge base of all these professionals.

Empowering the classroom teacher requires a shift in how we structure support services in schools. The ISSP and Pathways Commission found that 60.4% of classroom teachers surveyed felt that "the responsibility for teaching students receiving Pathways support belongs to special education teachers" (p 95). In schools where classroom teachers and special education teachers operate as separate entities – with little collaboration and consultation – classroom teachers are not receiving valuable support and information needed to teach to diverse learner populations. In today's classrooms collaboration and consultation between classroom and special education teachers is vital. Classroom teachers have expertise in the area of curriculum and special education teachers have expertise in the area of accessing curriculum. Together, their knowledge base is a powerful tool.

The structure of classrooms and the knowledge educators have about how students' learn has changed since I began school. As a result, educators are requesting professional development that supports teaching to diverse learning communities. However, in-service in differentiated instruction alone will not provide the full level of support teachers require. To support diverse learning environments teachers would benefit from a universally designed curriculum, an understanding of how that universal curriculum supports teaching to a diverse learning community, and a collaborative approach to teaching and learning.

There is a Chinese proverb: "He who stops completely before taking the next step will spend a lifetime standing on one leg". Educators have taken a giant first step towards an inclusive education system. Gone are the segregated "opportunity" classes of the 1970s and in their place is the "Pathways" model of special education placement options. The implementation of the "Pathways" model means that students who would once have been channelled into segregated classrooms are now taught in general education classrooms. Today, there are only a small number of students whose circumstances deem that they receive their schooling in alternate or segregated settings. However, to assume that having a cascade model of services means that we have done all that we need to do to support an inclusive education system would be a mistake. *Education and Our Future: A Road Map to Innovation and Excellence*, the report of the Teacher Allocation Commission (2007), emphasized that "teachers must understand the curriculum intended and the various teaching methodologies required" (p 83). By adopting the majority of recommendations of the Teacher Allocation and Pathways Commission Reports, the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education has acknowledged and begun to address the need for increased professional development, resources, and systemic structures designed to assist educators to teach to a diverse learner population. Once "standing on two legs", the teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador will have a solid foundation to continue their work in inclusive education.

Carolyn Wheeler Scott is Itinerant for Inclusive Education with the Eastern School District.

Underachievement of Capable Females

Interventions Within the Educational Context

by WAYNE NESBIT & KAYLA MURPHY

For decades females have faced, and continue to face, external and internal barriers that prevent them from achieving their full potential. Today, Canadian women have educational rights and many work outside the home, but inequalities are still present in leadership roles, pay equity and perceptions of women's abilities. Society encourages narrow role definitions and behavior options for women.

The underachievement of gifted women is a very complex issue with roots in cultural, social, psychological, and educational contexts. In her article "Why Are There So Few Eminent Women?", Linda Silverman calls attention to several valid issues pertaining to women's struggle to obtain prestige: *It takes only a cursory glance at her story within history to realize that with no independence, no access to education, no property rights, no opportunities for gainful employment in "men's" fields, no birth control, no relief from "women's work", and no support from society (not even from other women), it is nothing short of miraculous that any woman managed to get beyond her lot in life.* (1995)

It is little wonder that history has not recognized nor afforded a prominent place to female achievement, given the predictable derision and ostracism faced by women throughout history who crossed traditional boundaries. The phrase "That's not very lady like," has not passed into history.

It is a fact of history that women, until recent times, were viewed as intellectually inferior to men. Carolyn Yewchuk (2000), studying the relationship between intellectual capability and historical attempts to impune female intelligence, had this to say: "If you go back a century and read some of the stuff that was written about women and intelligence, it curls your hair. Some of that thinking is still around."

Linked to traditional acculturation is the difference in the way in which women and men have traditionally perceived success. While men stereotypically defined success in terms of educational achievement, occupational status, income level and material belongings, women traditionally defined achievement with a different focus – child nurturance, personal satisfaction as a mother, and promotion of a stable home-life. Traditional thinking forbade women to aspire to any vocation beyond maternity.

A major contributor to female underachievement is the fear which females have of being rejected if they depart from the traditional female role. Henfield and Witherspoon (2006) report that many girls who proudly exhibited academic excellence in preview stages of their schooling gradually abandon lofty goals in an effort to avoid isolation and exclusion.

For women who do decide to further their education or pursue a career they must often face the "double day" issue. That is, today's woman must balance her career/educational aspirations with her family commitments. Even so, it is still the case that women are the first to be blamed for family breakdown, especially if they work/pursue studies outside of the home.

Educational Barriers

The most effective way to prevent high achievement is to deny a person education. This is the situation in which women found themselves for years. As the barrier to school attendance for females was dropped, the reception which girls received at school very closely reflected the behavioral expectations defined for females by society in general. The docility and conformity inherent in the traditional social stereotype continue to confront gifted girls in school.

The Role of Teachers/Schools

During school years, one of the child's major role models will be the teacher. The teacher will either help children to achieve, or contribute to their underachievement. Teachers need to examine their belief systems in an in-depth self-study and acknowledge any personal bias before they are able to make changes

and remove gender bias from their teaching strategies, materials and student expectations.

Strategies/Interventions

- *Improve female students' self-concept and self-esteem*
  Ensure that all pupils see that the combination of being bright, achieving and female is possible. Discuss this issue with males and females.
- *Have high and positive expectations for females*
  Students are more likely to take risks when they feel safe, valued and respected in their environment by their teachers and peers. Teachers should make every effort to recognize students' unique characteristics, strengths, and needs.
- *Mentors and role models*
  Teachers should avail of successful females in their community who can share their experiences with students. Also, female teachers should not underestimate their influence on students as role models of achievement.
- *Select teaching materials that have a balanced gender focus*
  Make every effort to avoid teaching materials and resources that convey and reinforce gender stereotypes. Also, integrate examples of female achievements from numerous fields into the curriculum whenever possible.
- *Encourage female student participation in extracurricular activities and leadership roles*
  Participation in extracurricular activities and opportunities to be leaders help develop female confidence, responsibility, interpersonal skills and independence; which are important characteristics needed for educational achievement.
- *Facilitate Math and Science development*
  Teachers should encourage interest and participation in these subject areas, treat both genders as equal in these areas of study, and make every effort to change the perception that math and science are masculine domains. Recruit female students to participate in advanced courses.
- *Encourage risk taking*
  Often, the fear of failure as well as the messages these students receive to be passive, reserved and polite, holds them back from taking risks. Females must realize that developing interests and skills are accomplished by taking risks.
- *Organize female peer support groups*
  Such groups encourage girls to develop their abilities and connect with others who share their interests. In such groups girls might be exposed to non-traditional careers in a supportive atmosphere.
- *Advocate on behalf of gifted girls – especially with their parents, their teachers, their classmates, and themselves*
  Educate parents about the education of females. The attitudes that parents hold about females influences their behaviors. Principals, counselors and classroom teachers must provide career information in which achievement goals are emphasized equally for both girls and boys.

Educators must increase their efforts to eliminate the sexist biases that continue to be fostered in today's classrooms. To effectively and positively influence the underachievement of females, a whole school approach is recommended. King (1977) first coined the term "glass ceiling" to describe a persisting obstacle to female achievement. We must be careful not to create a glass ceiling in the process of educating female students.

Dr. Wayne Nesbit is a Professor at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University and Kayla Murphy is a graduate of MUN, currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Special Education program. This article is a summary of a research paper by the authors. The full paper and references can be accessed at www.nlta.nl.ca.

Enabling the Dreams of Others

by IAN DAVIDSON

One of the most important messages we can teach our students in the 21st century is that although we may live in different corners of the world, we are all connected. The more we share our skills, talents and economic largesse with our less fortunate international cousins the better off our whole world will be in the future. In keeping with these beliefs, I have recently accepted an offer to work with the non-profit group "Two Villages" as an educational liaison. Our goal for 2008 is to fund the building of a community seed bank in Wollo, Ethiopia. Through this project we hope to give our Ethiopian friends control over their own destiny and enable their dreams of a better future. As educators, I believe we should strive to make international philanthropy second nature to our students if we want to leave the world a little better at the end of the day.

Two Villages

Troy Mitchell and Krista Percy co-founded Two Villages in 2005. Their common interest in addressing international concerns led to the development of a community-based approach to fundraising. Essentially, Two Villages seeks to engage our community (village) to complete a project addressing the needs of another community (village) in the developing world. In 2008, we are expanding on our concept of "community" to include the entire province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Two Villages group was founded to effect change in impoverished areas of the world through community ownership and cooperation. With the assistance and linkages of international organizations such as CARE Canada, USC Canada and World Vision, we identify projects within a specific district or village and raise monies to fund their development. To date, Two Villages has successfully funded the building of a much-needed school in the Sindhuli District of Nepal. They also paired 10 schools in Newfoundland and Labrador with 10 schools in Zambia giving students an opportunity to attend school, increase their earning potential and ultimately give them hope to one day escape their life of poverty. Our next goal is to link students across the island, via the use of an innovative online learning community (rafi.ki), with the ultimate goal of raising funds to build a community seed bank. In keeping with the mission of our group, "Two Villages", theirs, and ours will be linked by generosity.

The Wollo Community Seed Bank

What exactly is a seed bank? To be honest, before I joined the Two Villages project team I did not know. A seed bank stores seeds as a source for planting in case seed reserves elsewhere are destroyed. It is a type of gene bank. The seeds stored may be food crops, or those of rare species to protect biodiversity. The reasons for storing seeds may be varied. In the case of food crops, many useful plants that were developed over centuries are now no longer used for commercial agricultural production and are becoming rare. Storing seeds also guards against catastrophic events like natural disasters, outbreaks of disease, or war.

Rationale for Volunteer Participation

The main fundraising activity associated with the Two Villages seed bank project is slated to happen on October 15, 2008 and will see participating schools host a rice day. On this day, the student body can donate funds and receive a bowl of rice in lieu of buying lunch. In addition to the rice day, student volunteers are free to organize any events they would like to raise monies for the Two Villages project. The big question for a lot of schools will be why they should encourage their student leaders to embrace this project. Speaking from the perspective of experience, I would like to offer the following reasons for your consideration.

Global Citizenship

As educators we must learn to value our emerging role of educating global citizens who see themselves not simply as Canadians, but also as human beings

bound to other human beings in ties of concern and understanding. Participation in the organization of a rice day is a powerful way to show students they are members of a broader community.

Scholarship Application

For those special children who take the lead on organizing rice day in their schools, their lives will be changed forever. They will now have international fundraising experience and the enhanced strength of character that comes with helping those less fortunate. At Two Villages, we believe that new veins of scholarship application will be opened to these student-leaders and their resumes will be more appealing to post-secondary institutions and future employers.

Enabling the Dreams of Others

Perhaps the most important rationale for participation in this program is rooted in the concept of hope. These students, and the entire student body, have the opportunity to enable the dreams of a community in Ethiopia and give their families hope for a better tomorrow. Powerful? You bet.

To close, we believe that in helping others, we shall help ourselves, for whatever good we give out completes the circle and comes back to us. Those of us fortunate enough to be born in North America need to realize that our world is changing. Increasing numbers of countries are developing at rapid rates and will soon be competing with us for global resources. The time to reach out to these people with the helping hand of friendship, philanthropy and knowledge is now. An old friend of mine recently shared the following quote with me when he learned of my participation in the Two Villages project; I would now like to share it with you to bring closure to this article: "Until we reach beyond our families to children in need, we will continue to neglect the needs of children closest to us by passing on to them a world that is unfit to inherit." How is that for motivation?!

Ian Davidson is Assistant Principal at Clarenville High School.

So You Think You CAN'T Dance

by KELLIE BAKER

Have you ever heard the statement "I was never any good at gym, so I don't expect my child to be"? It's often used as an excuse for students not applying themselves in other subjects like Math or French as well. Do you feel like such statements trivialize the course? Do you feel that it's unjust? Do you feel students are all individuals and that what they are able and interested in learning may be different than that of their family members? Then why do we, as Physical Educators, do the same thing when it comes to units such as dance? We may never have said "I was no good at dance, so how can I teach it?" or "I can't dance, so I can't teach my students to dance." But that's the covert message we are sending when we don't teach dance.

So, how can you offer dance with such barriers as your own biases, the belief that some students are going to be disruptive because of the topic, the fact that you have sent the message for many years that dance is not important by not including it in your program, lack of knowledge, lack of resources and stress over planning a unit of work with which you are unfamiliar? I ask these questions based on personal experience. In university one of my Profs had to take me aside and speak to me about the overt reluctance and lack of effort I was putting into the Creative Dance course. Folk Dance was a little better as I was paired with a good friend and through all the horsing around we actually learned a few dances on the side. My teaching career began, but fortunately for me, dance was not a required theme. As class after class came in and out of the gym and I became increasingly proficient at helping students become more skilled and knowledgeable movers who cared about themselves and others there was always a feeling that I wasn't offering a complete program without dance. I finally decided that I had taken the chance before to offer units in which I was not confident in my knowledge base so it was time to take the same leap with dance. Does this sound familiar? Is this you or a colleague? Is it your turn to take the leap?

Accept the fact that you have a negative bias towards dance and work to change it. Take a reflective look at your program and know that students are disruptive in a variety of classes and that this is an ongoing stressor, not inherently unique to specific units. Aspire to reach those students who may experience increased opportunities to shine if you added dance. Ask the School Board's P.E. itinerant, Department of Education, the Physical Education Special Interest Council (PESIC) and peers for information on proven resources. The music teacher at your school may be willing to partner with you to provide a cross-curricular unit perhaps helping you to secure funding for print/music/DVD resources. Decrease the stress by asking dance groups around your community to volunteer their time to teach you and your students.

"Aspire to reach those students who may experience increased opportunities to shine if you added dance."

Specifically, start slow and increase your comfort level as well as that of the students. A resource that should be in all NL schools is Christy Lane's *Multicultural Folk Dance Treasure Chest* and it's full of easy, medium and advanced dances from around the world. It has two books with explanations of the steps, two CDs of the music and two "how to" videos that explain how to teach the dance and show the dance in its entirety. The first two dances, the Hora and Hukilau are a great starting point. Athletes in your classes who have ever had to do the "carioca" will already know how to perform part of the sequence for the Hora. It's amazing to see how quickly the students will learn the dances. Make it more relevant for students by giving the option of allowing them to choose their own music. Just be

careful that the music is screened first. The Hora is actually easier to perform to AC/DC's "She Shook Me All Night Long", but probably not the most appropriate for school settings.

Another set of helpful resources that can also be used by classroom teachers is *65 Energy Blasters* and *6 Fit Kids' Workouts* by Judy Notte Howard which teach a variety of dance moves including Aerobic Dance, African, Athletic, Hip-Hop, Kardio Funk, and Latin. Once students know these moves they can begin choreographing their own short dances. An article entitled "Telephone Choreography" can assist in the process of how to begin choreography for even the most reluctant students. Again, school funding for the purchase of these DVDs may be made easier since it can be purchased as a school wide resource. One teacher at my school finds these DVDs most valuable for helping students hone their listening and comprehension skills and they are active all at the same time!

Dances that the whole school can learn and use to begin assemblies, or as a school wide afternoon "Pick Me Up" in the hallways are the YMCA, Cha-Cha Slide, Agadoo, and Chicken/Bird Dance. Although you don't want these to become the full extent of the dance unit, they provide a quick, fun, school wide opportunity for everybody to get up and dance on the spur of the moment. If you don't have these dances it is the perfect opportunity for a student to take a leadership role and create a CD. It's pretty amazing for a student to create something that they then see and hear the whole school using.

Jump in with both feet and get started! And, just like dance, once you've started, you can't stop. Good luck and have fun. You will be rewarded by the students' successes!

Kellie Baker is a Physical Education Teacher at Macpherson Elementary in St. John's.

Technology in Teaching with a "Focus on Revision"

by LAUN SHOEMAKER

A document camera or visual presenter is essentially a video camera that when connected to a media projector, serves as an overhead projector. The document camera projects the image of an item on its stage onto a large screen. The benefit of this technology is that teachers can show the whole class the image of a real product, remark on various aspects of the item and avoid time loss, off-task behavior and potential damage that can arrive when artifacts are passed around the classroom.

In February 2008, Grade 6S at Larkhall Academy received approval on a jointly funded project (Larkhall and Eastern School District) for a document camera, media projector and equipment cart. The project, titled "Focus on Revision," centered on Outcome 10: "Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness" generally and highlighted Outcome 10.4: "Show a commitment to drafting and redrafting texts." The equipment was proposed as a means of doing real-time whole-class peer editing while writing samples were being produced. Students would use the document camera to show their work to the class. Following this reading the group could make suggestions based on six traits writing models. The students reviewed pieces that included creative writing, essays, letters, hypotheses, math and other journal entries. In fact, any piece of writing became an opportunity for group feedback. Because the class could view the in-process writing sample, they could make comments on specific aspects and avoid simplifications ("Uh, it was good!") that don't make for meaningful revision. Similarly, the ongoing presence of the sample minimized inattention and helped peers to build on other's remarks. Improvement ideas were consequently well defined; writers could make changes with a clear direction and even insert verbatim phrases.

Some enhancements to the instructional process were also noted:

i) A recorder should be assigned to each presenter. Often, presenters received a high volume of feedback which made it impossible for them to incorporate all suggestions into their drafts without a written record.
ii) The idea of learning from other's mistakes was poorly followed during the project. Reviewers would make recommendations for an improvement to a weakness that was later revealed in their own writing sample. Eventually, the instructor paused at the end of presentations to reflect on general advice for common strengths and flaws which were exposed during sessions. These generalizations were noted on chart paper and kept handy for future use. Periodically this reflective period encouraged change in student work and chart notes were often referenced in later discussions.
iii) Perhaps the biggest challenge was that transfer between whole-group and small-group peer editing was poor. While students had seen the peer-editing process modeled in an itemized format during the whole group sessions, this step-by-step process did not transfer well when pairs worked on editing. Most recommendations in small group forums came down to revising conventions. This problem can likely be addressed with a wall-mounted peer-editing poster for whole class conferences and an identical letter-size checklist for use during small group meetings.

Acknowledging the above refinements to future teaching with this method, the project was quite successful in accomplishing its mandate. The instructor reviewed the evolution of writing on three major and dissimilar assignments. These three works showed startling change in many cases, with the greatest improvements being to organization, word choice and sentence fluency. The students were very motivated during discussions because the writing samples were authentic. Commitment to revision and whole writing process, however, depended largely on student interest in the topic and the purpose of their writing. Alas, technology can't change everything.

Laun Shoemaker is a Grade 6S ICF teacher at Larkhall Academy in St. John's.

The New Copyright Act and the Educational Use of the Internet

The Government of Canada has introduced a bill to amend the Copyright Act – Bill C-61 – that includes an important amendment respecting the educational use of the Internet. This bill, once passed by Parliament, will provide a legal framework to allow the use of publicly available Internet materials by educators and students, in their educational pursuits, without fear of copyright infringement.

Bill C-61 provides clarity for educators and students where before there was uncertainty about copyright. Bill C-61 assures Canadian teachers and students the ability, during their routine educational activities, to use material made publicly available on the Internet without breaking the law. In essence, the educational use of the Internet amendment makes legal the common everyday activities currently occurring in our schools, colleges, universities, and technical institutions. This includes activities such as copying publicly available material from the Internet, incorporating it in assignments, and exchanging it electronically with teachers or other students. Clearly, the amendment is essential in a day and age when federal and provincial/territorial governments are simultaneously increasing our levels of connectivity, positioning the country to be a leader in the information age, and supporting the use of the Internet in classrooms.

The bill's educational use of the Internet amendment is an attractive solution for Canada. There is a broad consensus within Canada's education community in favour of an amendment on educational use of the Internet, like the one found within Bill C-61. National education organizations representing seven million Canadians – from teachers to school boards, parent groups to educational institutions – have been vocal about the need to have fair and reasonable access to public available Internet material. Bill C-61 delivers on this need.

The bill's educational use of the Internet amendment is a fair and reasonable compromise for both copyright owners and users. The amendment would apply only to authorized educational use of publicly available materials, materials like those on educational Web sites such as the Canadian Encyclopedia, or on government Web sites like that of the Canadian Space Agency. The proposed amendment would not apply to Internet materials that are not publicly accessible. This allows content creators and copyright owners to continue selling and receiving payments for their work as they intend. The educational use of the Internet amendment in Bill C-61 is therefore a fair and reasonable compromise for copyright owners and users. It is a positive step towards maximizing Canadians' learning opportunities using on-line technology.

For further reading on the amendment and Canada's Copyright Act, visit www.cmec.ca/copyright/indexe.stm.

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NL COUNSELLORS' & PSYCHOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION (NLCPA) ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM

October 22-24, 2008

Battery Hotel & Suites, St. John's. Theme: *Prioritizing Counselling & Intervention in Our Schools*. For more information contact: Leona Gillard, NLCPA Communications Coordinator, leonagillard@esdnl.ca, Tel: 709-786-9056; or Trent Langdon, NLCPA President, trentlangdon@esdnl.ca, Tel: 709-786-0280.

TEACHING WITH THE BRAIN IN MIND

November 6-7, 2008

Delta Conference Centre, St. John's. Internationally renowned "brain-based learning" guru and educator Eric Jensen will be presenting this two-day workshop entitled *Teaching With the Brain in Mind*. For further information contact George Tucker, NLTA Administrative Officer (PD Division), gtucker@nlta.nl.ca; Tel: 709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245.

THE EDUCATION SHOW

November 12-13, 2008

Toronto Congress Centre. Canada's only national level industry trade event! The Education Show platform brings the educational products and services marketplace under one roof. Four feature zones: Healthy Education, Green, Technology, and School zone. Teacher's Appreciation Night – November 12 from 4-8 pm. This complimentary evening includes drinks, food, give-a-ways, gift bags and access to all of our exhibitors and will feature a presentation from Toronto Police Services: "Teacher Safety – How to Protect Yourself." Our theme this year is *Healthy Schools – Healthy Education*. For more information contact Courtney Day, tes@cogeco.net.

2008-09 Convention and Province-Wide Vote Deadlines

November 25, 2008
Deadline for receipt of poster information from candidates.

December 3, 2008
- All nominations for Office of President/Vice-President must be postmarked by this date for publication in Election issue of *The Bulletin*.
- Photograph, biographical sketch and election statement of nominees for Office of President/Vice-President must be postmarked by this date for publication in Election issue of *The Bulletin*.

December 30, 2008
Deadline for mailing of election posters to schools.

January 3, 2009
Mailing of Election issue of *The Bulletin*.

January 4, 2009
Final deadline for receipt of nominations for Offices of President and Vice-President.

January 15, 2009
Proposed change, amendment or repeal of NLTA By-Laws to be actioned by Convention must be presented in writing to the NLTA.

February 3, 2009
Province-wide vote for the election of President and Vice-President.

February 15, 2009
- All nominations for Provincial Executive for publication in Convention issue of *The Bulletin* must be postmarked or hand delivered to NLTA Office.
- Names of elected delegates and alternates to Convention should be forwarded to NLTA Office for printing in Convention issue of *The Bulletin*.
- Resolutions to Convention must be received at the NLTA Office.

February 17, 2009
Run-off ballot for the election of President and Vice-President (if required).

March 15, 2009
Mailing of Convention issue of *The Bulletin*.

April 14-17, 2009
Biennial General Meeting

April 16, 2009
Final deadline for receipt of nominations for Provincial Executive.

Dates to Remember

October 2008

Oct 16	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund Applications
Oct 16-17	Pre-Retirement Seminar, Corner Brook
Oct 17-18	School Rep Seminars, Deer Lake and Plum Point
Oct 23-24	Pre-Retirement Seminar, Grand Falls-Windsor
Oct 31	School Rep Seminar, Clarenville

November 2008

Nov 1	School Rep Seminar, Clarenville
Nov 7	**Deadline:** Project Overseas Applications
Nov 6-7	Pre-Retirement Seminar, Stephenville
Nov 13-14	Pre-Retirement Seminar, St. John's
Nov 15	**Department Deadline:** Teacher Exchange applications to Australia, Britain and USA
Nov 20-21	Pre-Retirement Seminar, St. John's
Nov 27	NLTA Executive Meeting
Nov 28-29	Joint Council Meeting